

APR 22 2003

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Docket No. 5126

In re the patent application of Herbert

Serial No. 10/087797

Filing date: March 5, 2002

Title: Mail Preparation System

Group Art Unit 3629 – Examiner Charles

Lorraine Walker
4/29/03

Commissioner for Patents
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GROUP 3600

AMENDMENT

Sir:

Please amend claim 1 as on the attached sheet.

This is a reply to the office action of October 22, 2003. All claims stand rejected over prior art. The rejections are respectfully traversed, for reasons set out below.

The present invention, like a number of prior art systems, is directed to reusing machine-applied postage for mail items which are never mailed.

Claim 1 recites a method comprising steps of:

- (a) processing a first mail item comprising a mail item in a series of mail items;
- (b) effecting an accounting operation in respect of a first postage charge for said first mail item;
- (c) generating a first postage indicium to provide evidence that said accounting operation has been effected in respect of said first postage charge;
- (d) processing a second mail item comprising a mail item subsequent to said first mail item in said series of mail items;
- (e) determining if said first postage remains unused because processing of said first mail item has not been completed; and, if said first postage is unused: